

DRAFT MINUTES

SENATE AND HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Thursday, July 20, 2017

The Senate and House Interim Committees on Agriculture, Forestry, and Economic Development met on Thursday, July 20, 2017, at 2:00 p.m., Room MAC B, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Committee members present: Senators Ronald Caldwell, Chair; Jonathan Dismang, Jane English, Blake Johnson, and David Wallace. Representatives Dan Douglas, Chairman; Scott Baltz, Rick Beck, Mary Bentley, Jack Fortner, Lane Jean, Mark McElroy, Ron McNair, Matthew Shepherd, Stephen Meeks, and David Whitaker.

Other legislators present: Senators Jake Files and Missy Irvin. Representatives Bob Ballinger, Jon Eubanks, Vivian Flowers, Grant Hodges, Joe Jett, Bob Johnson, George McGill, Reginald Murdock, Clint Penzo, Marcus Richmond, James Sorvillo, DeAnn Vaught, and Danny Watson.

Senator Caldwell called the meeting to order.

CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE MEETING MINUTES [Exhibits B1-B3]

Representative McElroy made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of May 24, 2017, July 7, 2017, and July 10, 2017. The motion was seconded by Representative Baltz, and without objection, the motion carried.

CONSIDERATION OF INTERIM STUDY PROPOSALS (ISPs) FOR ADOPTION AND STUDY:

Interim Study Proposal 2017-024: “To create the protection for dog owners act; to define deceptive trade practices for dog sales; to create the professional and direct-sell dog breeder act; and to create oversight of dog sellers.” [Exhibit C1]

Interim Study Proposal 2017-040: “To provide for Arkansas agritourism signs at state welcome centers and tourist information centers through the Arkansas wine country trails program.” [Exhibit C2]

Interim Study Proposal 2017-043: “To create the dog and cat sale registration act; and to create the dog and cat sale registration fund.” [Exhibit C3]

Representative McElroy made motion to adopt ISP 2017-024, ISP 2017-040, and ISP 2017-043. The motion was seconded by Representative Fortner, and without objection, the motion carried. [Exhibits C1-C3]

REPORTS RECEIVED – ARKANSAS INSTITUTIONAL FUND REPORTS [Exhibits D1 and D2]

The following Annual Arkansas Institutional Fund Reports were received by the Committee:

- January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015
- January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016

DISCUSSION CONCERNING WARFARIN FERAL HOG BAIT

Mr. Richard Poche, President, Scimetrix Limited Corporation, was recognized and presented a PowerPoint presentation titled, “Warfarin Feral Hog Bait: 3 Years of Field Testing” [see **Exhibit E1** for full report]. Mr. Poche stated the following:

- Feral hog cause approximately \$2-2.5 billion in crop damage annually. In addition, feral hogs spread 30 diseases and 37 parasites to livestock, pets, and humans.
- Scimetrix manufactures a warfarin-based kaput feral hog bait.
- Permits were issued by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the State of Texas to conduct field testing of the bait, and research began in 2015. Registration of Kaput feral hog bait was approved by the EPA on January 3, 2017.
- Hog stopper feeders with guillotine doors were developed to condition feral hogs to feeding in an effort to consume the bait. Feral hogs are more susceptible to low doses of warfarin, and within three to six hours of consuming the bait, the feral hog’s GI tract will turn blue. The fat soluble blue dye warns individuals the animal has consumed the bait.

Mr. Poche concluded by expressing his willingness to work with state and federal agencies to introduce this management tool to the market.

Mr. Jeff Crow, Director, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) and Dr. Jennifer Ballard, DVM, State Wildlife Veterinarian, AGFC, were recognized. Mr. Crow expressed his concerns with the warfarin hog bait. [Exhibit E2] Below are some of his concerns:

- Potential for direct exposure to other wildlife species.
- Potential indirect exposure to wildlife and domestic animals via scavenging of carcasses.
- Public safety issues for humans.

Mr. Crow stated the warfarin product was registered under the previous EPA administration, however, there was no input from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of Agriculture or the Food and Drug Administration. Moreover, a petition has been filed by the American Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies to suspend the warfarin registration until studies are concluded by the aforementioned entities if the product is licensed for use throughout the state.

Mr. Crow stated the AGFC is committed to fighting the fight against feral hogs, and is not opposed to the use of toxins to eliminate feral hogs, but would like for everyone involved to consider the unintended consequences of their actions. Dr. Ballard pointed out it may be 24 or more hours for the blue dye to take effect, however, the information presented earlier by Mr. Poche indicated it would take three to six hours. Notably, the website information for the product indicates 24 hours.

In an effort to control the feral hog population, the AGFC is focusing their efforts on trapping the full sounder. In 2016, AGFC trapped and killed approximately 3,000 hogs statewide, and to-date, AGFC has exceeded this number. Mr. Crow will provide the committee with the total costs and time it has taken to trap and kill feral hogs this year.

Representative Douglas asked would it be feasible for Arkansas to enter into a study or a field trial with Kaput. Mr. Crow stated AGFC has asked the Arkansas State Plant Board to issue a restricted permit if a permit is issued.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:17 p.m.